

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 ACDA-05 NASA-01 MC-02

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DRAFTED BY EA/K:PMAYHEW:JDB

APPROVED BY EA/K - MR. O'DONOHUE

OES-MR.BENGELSDORF (PARAS 1,2,5)

EA/J - MR. SMITH (PARA 4)

DOD/DSAA - MR. OXMAN (PARA 3)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 236780

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:MASS, MPOL, MMOL, BEXP, EMAG, KS

SUBJECT:VISIT OF PRESIDENT LEE OF SAMSUNG

REF: SEOUL 7400

1. PRESIDENT E. T. LEE OF SAMSUNG CALLED ON DEPARTMENT
SEPTEMBER 29. CONVERSATION ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY CONCERNED
SAMSUNG'S EXPLORATION OF POSSIBILITY OF PRIVATE MULTI-
NATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING FACILITY. LEE SAID HE
HAD BEEN ENCOURAGED IN PURSUIT OF IDEA OF US-JAPANESE-KOREAN
REPROCESSING FACILITY BY INTEREST EXPRESSED IN IT BY
JAPANESE NUCLEAR FUEL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS. LATTER
HAVE APPARENTLY ASSISTED PRELIMINARY EXPLORATION AND PLAN-
BY SAMSUNG STAFF. LEE SAID HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED IDEA WITH
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ROKG.

2. DEPTOFFS EXPLAINED DIFFICULT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN REPROCESSING, STRESSING THAT GOVERNMENT LEVEL AGREEMENTS VIRTUAL SINE QUA NON TO EVEN CONSIDER REPROCESSING PROPOSAL, THAT WE GENERALLY RELUCTANT TO EXPORT SUCH TECHNOLOGY, AND THAT WITHIN US REPROCESSING HAD PROVEN EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE AND FRAUGHT WITH ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL

PROBLEMS. WE THEREFORE SUGGESTED SAMSUNG APPROACH REPROCESSING QUESTIONS VERY CAUTIOUSLY. ON THE OTHER HAND, DEPTOFFS SAID THEY SAW NO PARTICULAR PROBLEM WITH FACILITIES TO FABRICATE LOW ENRICHED URANIUM FUEL WHICH LEE MENTIONED AS ADJUNCT TO REPROCESSING.

3. LEE WAS CLOSEMOUTHED ON EUROPEAN VISIT, SAYING HIS EXPLORATIONS THERE VERY PRELIMINARY. HE NOTED IN PASSING THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE AWARENESS OF ROKG'S NEW DEFENSE TAX AND IMPLICATIONS IT MIGHT HAVE FOR ARMS PURCHASES IN EUROPE.

4. INTERESTINGLY, ROK EMBASSY DEF ATT NOT AWARE LEE VISIT UNTIL INFORMED BY DOD. AFTER QUERYING ROKG, DEFATT SAID VISIT HAD NO MND ENDORSEMENT. THIS RESULTED IN NOTABLE LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR VISIT ON PART OF US COMPANIES INVOLVED. WE WOULD HOPE THAT IN FUTURE EMBASSY/JUSMAG WOULD URGE BUSINESSMEN INTERESTED IN DEFENSE MANUFACTURE OR PROCUREMENT TO OBTAIN MND ENDORSEMENT (AND THUS ROKG EMBASSY ASSISTANCE) FOR SUCH VISITS.

5. FOR TOKYO: ACCORDING TO SAMSUNG AIDE, LEE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN DISCUSSING NUCLEAR REPROCESSING WITH EMBASSY TOKYO AND HAS NAME OF SCIENCE REP HENOCH. WE TOLD AIDE TOKYO IS NOT REPEAT NOT THE LOCUS FOR ANY DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. HE THEN INDICATED LEE'S DESIRE TO MEET EMBOFF IN ECONOMIC AREA. WE SUGGESTED LEE CONTACT ECONOMIC COUNSELOR PIEZ.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR FUELS, INDUSTRIAL PLANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE236780
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PMAYHEW:JDB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750345-0366
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751086/aaaacyyd.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SEOUL 7400
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <18 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ISIT OF PRESIDENT LEE OF SAMSUNG
TAGS: MASS, MPOL, MMOL, BEXP, EMAE, KS, (LEE, E T)
To: SEOUL
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006